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Tuesday 7 May 2024

Essential Services Commission
Greater Western Water draft decision
2024 Water Price Review
Via e-submission

To whom it may concern

Re: Greater Western Water draft decision

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Greater Western Water's (GWW) draft decision as part of the 2024 Water Price Review. Hume's response to the draft decision focuses on the removal of the stormwater harvesting partnership fund.

Hume City Council is significant water user and manages stormwater drainage assets with catchments less than 60 ha. A significant amount of water is to maintain open spaces. Hume's open spaces are an essential part of the urban environment, with numerous benefits for our communities and our natural environment. Open spaces:

- Provide opportunity for physical activity.
- Improve mental wellbeing.
- Encourage social and community connectedness.
- Provide habitat for a range of flora and fauna.
- Help reduce urban heat impacts in urban environments by creating space for green landscapes, shady tree canopy, water bodies and water features.

GWW currently supplies water and recycled water services to Council reserves in Sunbury, Bulla and Tullamarine. By helping Hume replace these water sources with stormwater, they are delivering their obligations, particularly in areas that do not have recycled water. Stormwater provides a resilient water supply, even during drought, that will help avoid water restrictions and/or expensive water supply augmentations.

Hume stormwater harvesting projects are outlined in the Integrated Water Management Plan 2020-2025. These projects were identified from a longlist of opportunities as the best value for money projects. These projects and a capital budget were endorsed by Council in March 2020. The capital budget does not fully fund the projects and Council is reliant on external funding to meet the shortfall. Hume's stormwater harvesting projects have been submitted to DEECA's IWM Forum and listed as priority projects in the Maribyrnong and Yarra catchments. This assessment was based on the capital and operating cost and the benefits delivered for the catchment. The projects that are also in GWW's service area are:

- O'Brien St stormwater harvesting scheme. This scheme will irrigate Sunbury Cemetery and Kathleen Aitken Reserve. Kathleen Aitken Reserve has been identified as an oasis area in Council's Open Space Strategy.
- Leo Dineen Reserve stormwater Harvesting scheme. This scheme will irrigate a sporting reserve in Tullamarine.

Hume City Council understands that GWW will establish a competitive process to prioritise and fund projects that demonstrate they meet GWW's broader objectives for water supply.

Hume City Council commends Greater Western Water's support of local government to implement stormwater harvesting schemes and support the inclusion of the stormwater harvesting partnership fund in the price submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. McSwain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ADAM MCSWAIN
DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS